



House of Commons  
Education and Skills Committee

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**Bullying: Government  
Response to the  
Committee's Third  
Report of Session  
2006–07**

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**Third Special Report of Session  
2006–07**

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## The Education and Skills Committee

The Education and Skills Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Education and Skills and its associated public bodies.

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### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are David Lloyd (Clerk), Jyoti Chandola, (Second Clerk), Libby Aston (Committee Specialist), Nerys Roberts (Committee Specialist), Katie Phelan (Committee Assistant), Susan Ramsay (Committee Secretary), and John Kittle (Senior Office Clerk).

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## Third Special Report

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The Committee published its Third Report of Session 2006–07 (Bullying) on 27 March 2007.<sup>1</sup> The Government's response was received on 18 May 2007, and is published as Appendix 1 to this Report. In addition to the response, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP) wrote to the Committee on 4 June 2007 and this letter is published as Appendix 2 to this Report.

## Appendix 1

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### Education and Skills Select Committee Report on Bullying: The Government's Response

The Select Committee's recommendations are in bold text.

The Government's response is in plain text.

The Committee recognised the significant increase in the amount of anti-bullying work done by the Government since 1999. The Department notes that the Committee welcomed many of its initiatives, including the work on cyberbullying; our main Departmental guidance; the work with BeatBullying and Stonewall on faith-based bullying and homophobic bullying respectively; and the funding of Parentline Plus.

Since the Department submitted its evidence to the Committee in October 2006, there have been some further developments in the Anti-bullying work strand and the Department's wider Improving Behaviour and Attendance Programme. A key event was the publication of the *School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies* guidance, which followed the coming into force on 1 April 2007 of a number of provisions on school discipline in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006). The new guidance explains what the legal duties and powers mean for school staff in practical terms. It will help to guide governors, head teachers and other school staff in regulating the conduct of pupils and designing robust policies and behaviour management strategies.

Another significant development is the Department's programme of work on bullying with the National Strategies. The National Strategies have been asked to identify secondary schools with weak or ineffective anti-bullying policies and practice, based on information gathered from schools themselves and from local authority (LA) consultants, as well as from the number of complaints received by a LA about a school. Regional advisers and LA consultants, alongside the relevant School Improvement Partner (SIP), or link advisor where there is no SIP, will provide support and challenge to these schools, working with them to embed good practice using a whole school approach, as well as development of appropriate intervention strategies at both staff and pupil level. Progress on this work will be monitored and reported to the Department on a regular basis.

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1 Third Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2006–07, *Bullying*, HC 85.

Work either already exists or is in train to meet many of the recommendations in the Committee's report. This response takes each of the Committee's recommendations in turn and states what is already being done or what work is planned to address the Committee's concerns.

## Defining and identifying bullying

**1. We welcome the current DfES guidance to schools, that they should involve the entire school community in agreeing a definition of bullying. We recommend that additional guidance is given to schools on how to ensure difficult issues, such as the use of homophobic language and more subtle forms of bullying are included in this process.**

The EIA 2006 re-enacts the duty on head teachers to determine measures with a view to "encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils". Ministers made clear during the passage of the Bill that this specifically included homophobic bullying.

Our general guidance document on bullying, which is currently being revised and is due to be reissued in the coming months, outlines the importance of schools tackling all forms of bullying. We have used the expertise of the main professional associations, anti-bullying experts, head teachers and school staff to construct a practical web-based resource that will provide school staff with the advice they need effectively to challenge and prevent bullying within their schools. The revised guidance will make clear that anti-bullying policies must address all forms of bullying and this includes bullying related to race, religion and culture; homophobic bullying; sexist and sexual bullying; bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disability; and cyberbullying. The guidance will also state that the anti-bullying policy should also cover the bullying of school staff, whether by pupils, parents or other staff. However, the bullying of staff by staff, or incidents of staff bullying pupils, should be dealt with by the school's internal disciplinary procedures.

The Department's developing suite of guidance on prejudice-driven bullying already includes guidance on Bullying around racism, religion and culture (issued March 2006). We are currently producing guidance on tackling homophobic bullying—in conjunction with Stonewall and Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH)—and this will be published later this year. The Committee welcomed this work. We will support the launch of the guidance with a series of nationwide events to introduce the materials to LAs and school staff and to encourage them to engage with the issues it addresses. Later this year, we will start work on guidance to tackle bullying related to pupils' special educational needs or disabilities and we will again look to involve the expertise of those working in this area to ensure the guidance meets the needs of its users.

The Department also plans to produce specialist advice on gang bullying, a problem affecting a very small minority of schools. We have consulted with schools, LAs, the Home Office, Ofsted, the police and the Youth Justice Board, and are in the process of pulling together some best practice case studies and producing an initial draft of the advice for consultation with key stakeholders.

Our revised overarching anti-bullying guidance, and other planned forthcoming guidance, provides a proposed definition of bullying for schools to use, shape and adapt within their own anti-bullying policies. Our specialist guidance provides additional support to ensure schools are aware of the different forms of bullying, and the ways in which these can manifest themselves.

**2. All schools should ensure that parents, pupils and staff are aware of the agreed definition. Teachers, other staff, pupils and parents should all be aware of how the definition affects their own behaviour and what is expected of them. Schools should review their policy and reported incidents regularly and use this as an opportunity to achieve consistency in reporting and responding to incidents of bullying and to develop teachers' skills in tackling them.**

The Anti-Bullying Charter, which all schools are encouraged to sign up to or use in developing their own policies, promotes regular review and monitoring and encourages schools to agree a shared definition of bullying.

Further, the EIA 2006 introduced a new requirement on school governing bodies to consult with all pupils and with appropriate members of staff on the principles underlying the school behaviour policy (in addition to the head teacher and the parents of registered pupils, as previously required through the School Standards and Framework Act 1998). The resulting behaviour policy, determined by the head teacher, must be publicised and made known to all staff, pupils and parents at least once a year. We recommend that ideally the anti-bullying policy should form part of the overall school behaviour policy, although a school may decide to issue a separate and specific anti-bullying policy. These legal provisions and supporting guidance should ensure that all members of the school community have the opportunity to help shape the definition of bullying and are aware of the school's approach to dealing with incidents of bullying.

The Department's new *School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies* guidance (published April 2007) strongly recommends that schools undertake an audit of behaviour and review their policies as a result. The revised general anti-bullying guidance will reiterate this. Policies should be reviewed every two years. Schools should also review general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development (CPD) and identify how to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school. Where specific training needs have been identified for particular members of staff, through school self-evaluation and individual performance management reviews, the head teacher must ensure that those members of staff have access to the advice, training and development opportunities appropriate to their needs.

**3. We would recommend that schools target their attention on key times and locations where bullying is more prevalent.**

The Department agrees with this, and this recommendation will be included in the forthcoming revised anti-bullying guidance for schools. The revised guidance will also recommend that schools work with pupils to establish when and where these key times and locations are. It advises schools to use available data to identify how the school environment and travel to and from school can be made safer, in order to help reduce incidents of bullying. Schools are advised to look at: staff supervision patterns, in the

playground, school buildings, and on school transport; the physical design of the school building(s), including investigating ‘blind spots’ where bullying could take place; whether ‘quiet play’ areas could be established in playgrounds or short term safe rooms for use at break times; and joint work with partners such as transport service providers.

In addition to this, the Department has recently produced a guidance note on school design with the section *Toilets in Schools, Standard Specifications, Layouts and Dimensions* (May 07) which considers how to improve areas of the school building where bullying may be a particular concern.

## Cyber-bullying

**4. Given that it is more common for cyber-bullying to take place outside schools we urge the Department when it produces guidance to ensure that it includes guidance for parents and pupils as well as for schools.**

As well as our upcoming guidance for schools on cyberbullying, which the Committee welcomed, the Department is working with industry partners on a major digital information campaign for young people. This will target both those being bullied and those doing the bullying. The Department is currently undertaking research with young people on the subject of cyberbullying to inform and develop key, relevant messages for the planned digital campaign.

In addition, we are working with Childnet International—with whom we are producing the guidance for schools—to develop information for parents on cyberbullying, to aid them in protecting their children from online bullying when using their home computer or mobile phone.

## Prejudice-driven bullying

**5. The focus of any anti-bullying work should be tackling bullying behaviour and making it clear that such behaviour is not acceptable.**

This is indeed the Department’s primary focus. The first paragraph of the current anti-bullying guidance, *Don’t Suffer in Silence*, states that bullying must be effectively challenged in order to “make clear to bullies that the behaviour is unacceptable”. The revised guidance, to be issued shortly, will make clear the Department’s position that all forms of bullying must not be tolerated and should always incur a disciplinary sanction. It is important that sanctions have learning outcomes and that the pupil changes his/her behaviour as a result.

**6. We have, through the course of the inquiry, become convinced that a lack of accurate reliable data on bullying is one barrier to more effective anti-bullying work. We recommend that the Department introduces a requirement for schools to record all incidents of bullying along with information about the type of bullying incident.**

The Department recommends as best practice that schools record all incidents of bullying and report the statistics to their LA. We will be strengthening this message in our revised anti-bullying guidance and will continue to ensure it is clear within our planned specialist advice. Schools also have a specific duty to meet their legal obligations under the Race

Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, to have a race equality policy and monitor its impact on pupils, staff and parents. The Department's *Recording and Reporting Racist Incidents Guidance* (December 2006) states that schools should report the number of racist incidents at the school at least annually to their LA.

However, we do not think it necessary to introduce a statutory requirement to record incidents of bullying and there would be logistical difficulties in doing so. In addition, introducing a statutory requirement for schools to record bullying incidents will not necessarily persuade more schools to do so.

Furthermore, if data on bullying is recorded there are additional problems in terms of how this data is collected and interpreted. In particular, there are issues around consistency of definition and how bullying might be reported if it continues over a significant period of time (i.e. some schools might log it once and others numerous times). There is also a question of how we might interpret, say, an increase in reported incidents, which might occur as the result of an improved anti-bullying policy and new focus on openness within the school. These complications could lead to more bureaucracy and greater workload for schools. Some of the teacher unions in particular have objected to having a legal requirement on these grounds, and believe it best to leave the matter to teachers' common sense. The National Strategies, as part of their remit to work with schools with weak or ineffective anti-bullying policies, will offer support if problems around recording incidents are identified.

The forthcoming *Tellus 2* survey should give us more comprehensive data on young people's experiences of bullying in schools. It will be an annual survey (starting this year), covering all LAs. Data will be considered by Ofsted in their annual performance assessment (APA) of each LA's services, and could lead to Ofsted looking more closely at anti-bullying practices in a particular authority's joint area review (JAR). We are currently looking at how we might use data derived from the survey to inform future policy development.

#### **7. We believe the DfES should commission new research on SEN related bullying and its impact leading to guidance for schools.**

As part of the Department's suite of guidance on prejudice-driven bullying, we have recently announced that we will be producing dedicated guidance on tackling bullying related to special educational needs and disabilities. We have begun to meet with interested lobby groups and experts and hope to start work on this guidance later in the year. We intend to work closely with the Special Educational Consortium and other charities and groups with an interest in this area, drawing on current research.

The Department's contract with the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) includes a specific research element, which is fulfilled by a senior researcher at Goldsmiths College and his team. In the last financial year, one of the projects undertaken on behalf of the Department was on disability and bullying. This review, already published within a recent edition of the ABA publication *Spotlight*, will inform the guidance.

#### **8. Unless specific kinds of bullying are explicitly included in anti-bullying policies, we believe there is a danger that they will not be adequately addressed. We urge the Department to ensure their guidance to schools makes clear that the focus of anti-**



**bullying work should be on changing bullying behaviour rather than on how victims can change their own behaviour. As a result of the evidence we have taken, we believe the Department should require schools' anti-bullying policies to specifically mention disability-related, race-related, faith-based and homophobic bullying. Schools should ensure staff feel confident in dealing with prejudice-driven bullying and are consistent in their approach.**

In its anti-bullying guidance to schools, the Department places a strong emphasis on disciplining pupils who bully and on working with them to change their behaviour. The guidance also includes advice on helping the pupil who has been bullied, recommending befriending/'buddying' systems, peer mentoring, or assertiveness training, for example, but this should not be done in isolation from working with and sanctioning the bully.

As already mentioned, there is a statutory duty on head teachers to determine measures to prevent all forms of bullying (EIA 2006 s89(1)(b)) and the Department's revised guidance will make clear that anti-bullying policies must address all forms. This includes bullying related to race, religion and culture; homophobic bullying; sexist and sexual bullying; bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disability; and cyberbullying. The suite of guidance in production on prejudice-driven bullying should help ensure that school staff are aware of the different forms that bullying can take and are confident in dealing with all types of bullying.

The Anti-Bullying Charter, first issued in 2003, also advises schools to identify and respond to all forms of bullying, specifically mentioning homophobic and racist bullying, and the bullying of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs.

## **Bullying of Teachers**

**9. School leaders should ensure that anti-bullying policies do not overlook the bullying of teachers, either by students or by other staff and that incidents of bullying that involve staff are dealt with appropriately.**

The revised general anti-bullying guidance for schools will state that, as well as dealing with the bullying of pupils by pupils, anti-bullying policies should cover the bullying of school staff, whether by pupils, parents or other staff. The bullying of staff should be taken very seriously and schools can use the new powers in EIA 2006 to deal with incidents of bullying or harassment that occur outside of school, as well as in. The *School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies* guidance also makes clear that pupils should be disciplined for making false or malicious allegations against school staff, which can itself be a form of bullying.

The bullying of staff either by their peers or by management is a matter for the employer, which is, in the majority of schools, the LA. The Department would expect that issues of this nature are resolved at a local level, with legal action being taken where appropriate.

The Government deplores any incidents of bullying and discrimination in our schools. Bullying or discrimination of teachers and the wider school workforce by anyone is unacceptable. Teachers and school support staff who feel that they have been subjected to bullying should report incidents to their employer and, where appropriate, their professional association immediately. The vast majority of teachers are members of one of the teacher unions and can call upon assistance from specially trained staff within the



union both at local and national level. Additionally, the Teacher Support Line is a free service that teachers can use and which provides confidential advice and guidance on bullying issues.

## Medium and Long-term effects of bullying

**10. We support the right of schools to use exclusion as a disciplinary sanction. However, we are concerned to hear that some schools are excluding the victims of bullying on health and safety grounds. Violence in retaliation against bullying is unacceptable and schools are right to discipline the perpetrators of violence. However, we would expect previous bullying to be taken into account when deciding on appropriate disciplinary measures. We urge the Department to issue new guidance to local authorities and schools, as a matter of urgency, covering not only when exclusions should be used, but also when they must not be used, for example, to prevent the victims of bullying from attending school.**

Pupils should not be excluded for being bullied, even if the school believes they are doing so for the child's benefit. The Department's *Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units* makes clear that pupils must not be excluded from school other than as a disciplinary sanction. The legislation on exclusion states clearly that "exclude [...] means exclude on disciplinary grounds" (section 52(10) of the Education Act 2002). The guidance explicitly says—and we will reiterate this in the revised anti-bullying guidance—that children should only be sent home for health and safety reasons where "because of a diagnosed illness such as a notifiable disease he or she poses an immediate and serious risk to the health and safety of other pupils and staff".

Where a pupil has been bullied and is provoked into "hitting out", they might be excluded from school for violent behaviour. Head teachers have discretion to exclude pupils for threatened or actual violence, either permanently or for a fixed period. This could apply to the victims of bullying who fight back as well as to the perpetrators of bullying. The Department leaves it as matter for the head teacher's judgement, taking account of the evidence available, all the circumstances of the case and the need to balance the interests of the pupil concerned against those of the whole school community. However, before deciding to exclude a pupil, the head teacher should allow the pupil to state their case, and check whether the incident may have been provoked by, for example, racial or sexual harassment. We will reiterate this also in the revised anti-bullying guidance.

**11. We recommend that punishment regimes are reviewed to incorporate where permissible 'pupil suggested' punishments i.e. litter picking and school clean ups. This will bring pupils to the heart of the process and they will feel that they have had a real influence in the measures to tackle the issue. It also means that the pupils will have determined what they feel is a 'fair punishment' for these matters.**

The revised anti-bullying guidance will advise schools to develop the different roles that pupils can play in responding to incidents of bullying. One of the ways to involve pupils is to encourage them to have a say about the disciplinary sanction regime of their school and suggest suitable sanctions for bullies. This will ensure pupils view sanctions as fair and will make them feel they have an influence over tackling the issue. The new legal requirement to consult with pupils on the underlying principles of the school behaviour policy—into

which we recommend the anti-bullying policy should be incorporated—will also give them a voice in this matter.

Other suggested ways in which pupils might be encouraged to help themselves and each other include: as trained peer mentors or trained mediators; through class, circle or tutorial time; through assertiveness training; and through the active teaching of social and emotional skills, promoted by the Department's Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme.

**12. We recommend the Department commission research into the long-term effect of bullying on those who are bullied and those who bully and effective ways of challenging bullying behaviour. Advice for schools, including on what services are available for those bullies whose behaviour cannot be dealt with in a school setting, should be made available. We urge local authorities to ensure schools have clear guidance on what services are available to work with this type of persistent bully and to ensure that young people in their area who are excluded as a result of bullying have continuing access to the support necessary to change their behaviour.**

The Department has not commissioned its own long-term study into bullying since it is not apparent in what ways this would particularly benefit the formulation of our anti-bullying policies. Rather, we continue to work with experts in the field, including schools, LAs and the National Strategies, as well as the anti-bullying charities and voluntary associations, to assess where particular needs exist. In addition, we have once again commissioned the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) to prepare targeted research on bullying in light of our policy priorities. One of the research projects scheduled for the 2007–08 financial year will be on how schools can best support children and young people displaying bullying behaviours towards their peers.

The ABA is also planning a substantial piece of research into reactive anti-bullying strategies, as recommended by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) in the Bullying Today report. The research would be intended to ensure that children and young people receive only the most effective forms of intervention when bullying occurs. The research team believe that the plethora of anti-bullying techniques and the increasing 'marketability' and commercialisation of such techniques is of great concern to the anti-bullying sector. The ABA has therefore proposed that a major focus of their research agenda for the next year will be on designing and developing this research, headed up by Professor Peter Smith of Goldsmiths College, and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in order to move the OCC's recommendation forward and lay the groundwork for a substantial piece of research. We think this is the best way forward.

As regards providing advice on the services available to help deal with pupils whose behaviour cannot be dealt with in a school setting, the revised anti-bullying guidance will include information about alternative provision for pupils for whom mainstream school is not appropriate. The Department has also produced guidance on alternative provision and pupil referral units designed to assist LAs and schools to arrange and provide effective alternative education for those who need it.

As part of the Department's strategy to facilitate a vibrant alternative provision market, we are considering ways by which schools and other commissioners can find information about the offerings available locally to ensure that pupils' needs are efficiently targeted.

## Recording incidents of bullying

**13. The Department and local authorities should work towards creating a culture where schools are open about any bullying taking place within them. We recommend that all local authorities, in partnership with schools, develop a robust system for the collation, evaluation and reporting of bullying for the purpose of effectively improving the tackling and management of this issue across all schools in their area. We recommend that Ofsted regularly inspect the effectiveness of this process.**

See response to recommendation 6. The Department will continue to recommend in its revised anti-bullying guidance that schools record all incidents of bullying and report the statistics to their LA. The purpose of reporting incidents to the LA is to enable the gathering of information on the number and nature of bullying incidents and to identify any developing trends. The guidance will further advise that the LA should analyse the information gathered from schools to identify any issues of particular concern. This will enable the authority to be better informed in the development of appropriate strategies to tackle bullying across its area, as part of the needs assessment that underpins the Children and Young People's Plan. The data will also enable LAs to support and challenge schools in their duties to promote the welfare of pupils.

**14. We are concerned that decisions on anti-bullying policy are being made with very little evidence to guide them. We urge the Government to commission a long-term study of a number of schools, looking at both general trends in bullying and also the effectiveness of different approaches in different circumstances.**

See response to recommendation 12. In addition to the proposed new research to be carried out by the ABA, an evaluation of the Department's existing general guidance on bullying, *Don't Suffer in Silence*, was carried out by researchers at Goldsmiths College in April 2003. The results showed that schools found it helpful in drawing up their anti-bullying policies and met their expectations. This evaluation included research into the perceived success of anti-bullying strategies and interventions recommended in the guidance. Schools generally reported a high level of satisfaction with the interventions they had used. The Department also had the ChildLine in Partnership with Schools (CHIPS) programme evaluated in 2004 and used the resulting recommendations to strengthen our working relationship with ChildLine.

Most recently, the Department's programme of work with the ABA, an umbrella organisation bringing together over 60 voluntary organisations dealing with bullying, has been externally evaluated. The PWC report, published in March 2007, included recommendations as to how the Department's relationship with the ABA might be strengthened and improved. However, the report was broadly positive and concluded that the ABA "plays a crucial role in accessing and brokering the broad range of available deep expertise and in consensus building", and that their programme of work is "broadly aligned to DfES stated policies and priorities". The Department's partnership with the ABA

has greatly helped in raising awareness and understanding of bullying issues and in developing good practice.

## Balance between national and local anti-bullying policy

**15. We accept that there are significant advantages to schools being allowed to develop their own anti-bullying policy. However, the Department and local authorities should provide clear guidance on how to develop effective policies. This guidance should include information on the minimum standard expected for schools' policies and what should be included. The minimum standard should apply to all state funded schools, including those with a faith-based ethos.**

The revised anti-bullying guidance for schools will provide an update on government policy and relevant legislation; be tighter and more focused; and have more of an emphasis on practical advice. We have worked in close collaboration with an advisory group consisting of representatives from the professional associations, Ofsted, the Office of the Children's Commissioner, National Strategies and the Anti-Bullying Alliance on the development of this guidance. The new guidance, which will apply to all maintained schools including faith-based schools, will take a more directive line than in the past, clearly setting out the relevant legislation and stating that school anti-bullying policies should include measures on tackling all forms of bullying and should cover the bullying of pupils and of school staff.

However, it is important that schools have the flexibility to design an anti-bullying policy that is fit for purpose and takes account of the specific circumstances of their school community. Some types of bullying will be more prevalent in certain schools, while other schools will need to focus on a completely different type of bullying or will need to tackle a different degree of bullying. Similarly, different intervention strategies—both preventative and reactive—will work best in certain schools and not others. The Department, therefore, does not feel it would be right to take an overly prescriptive approach to the content of individual policies.

The Anti-Bullying Charter provides a framework for how schools might construct their anti-bullying policy, using self-evaluation questions to ensure that a school considers its own individual needs. We expect state schools, including faith-based schools, to use the Charter to formulate an effective, tailored policy, rather than just sign and ignore it.

## Effective anti-bullying programmes

**16. We recommend that there should be research conducted to assess the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes recommended by the DfES to ensure that schools, local authorities and the Department are using their budget effectively. We would expect this research to address the issue concerning which anti-bullying programmes are effective in different situations, and for guidance to schools to follow to help teachers choose the most appropriate method to use for individual cases.**

See responses to recommendations 12 and 14.

## Work carried out by the voluntary sector

**17. We recommend that the Anti-Bullying Alliance, together with the Department, consider how it can better promote good practice across all schools, local authorities and voluntary organisations involved in anti-bullying work. If necessary, the Department should provide additional resources to enable the ABA to spread good practice to schools and encourage robust discussion about the effectiveness of different anti-bullying programmes.**

The Department has a contract with the ABA for a specific programme of work intended to embed effective anti-bullying practice in schools. The ABA has a team of 9 part-time regional co-ordinators who are engaged with 95% of LAs. The regional co-ordinators monitor the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Charter, work with LAs to organise training and promote best practice, and organise regional meetings and events at which effective strategies and barriers to success can be discussed.

In addition, the Department's programme of work with the National Strategies will ensure that schools with weak or ineffective anti-bullying policies are identified and supported and that effective partnerships are developed with LA anti-bullying co-ordinators. We will work with these schools to embed good practice and develop their intervention strategies.

We will work with the ABA, National Strategies and other providers over the coming months to ensure that national resources available are used to the best effect to embed effective practice, and will review the current arrangements in light of the PWC evaluation findings.

**18. We are concerned that there is insufficient focus in teacher training on bullying. We recommend that all ITT courses include a clear focus on how to prevent and address bullying.**

The Requirements for Initial Teacher Training make clear that ITT courses must prepare trainee teachers for the classroom and ensure that they can “set high expectations for pupils’ behaviour and establish a clear framework for classroom discipline”. They should be able to anticipate and manage pupils’ behaviour constructively and promote self-control. From September 2007, there will be new standards for Qualified Teacher Status. To be awarded QTS, trainees will have to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies and know how to use and adapt them. These standards will go a long way towards preparing trainee teachers for dealing with bullying in school.

The great majority of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) think that their initial teacher training has equipped them to manage pupil behaviour. In the 2007 survey of NQTs, over 90% responded that their behaviour training had given them adequate, good or very good skills to establish and maintain behaviour in the classroom.

**19. We recommend that every school is expected to review its anti-bullying policy every three years and that this should include a review of the training needs of staff. We also urge local authorities to assess the content of courses to ensure staff receive sufficient training on how to deal with bullying related to SEN, race, gender and sexuality.**

The *School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies* guidance suggests that schools should review their behaviour policy, within which their anti-bullying policy may sit, every two years. In addition, our revised over-arching anti-bullying guidance recommends such an approach, irrespective of where the school anti-bullying policy resides. Schools should also take regular opportunities to review their wider policies on equalities, including their Disability Equality Scheme (which public authorities are required to report on annually).

In relation to staff training, the guidance states—as previously mentioned—that the head teacher “should ensure that all staff are clear about the expectations in the behaviour policy and procedures which they should use” and where specific training needs have been identified for particular members of staff, through school self-evaluation and individual performance management reviews, “the head teacher must ensure that those members of staff have access to the advice, training and development opportunities appropriate to their needs”. This is one of the head teacher’s professional duties specified in the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document.

The guidance lists various resources and training courses that can be drawn upon in developing the capacity of the school and in developing good practice with regard to promoting positive behaviour for learning. In addition to the well-regarded National Strategies Behaviour and Attendance toolkit, a school might use: the Improving Behaviour for Learning DVD for secondary schools; the accredited National Programme for Specialist Leaders in Behaviour and Attendance (NPSL-BA); the National Professional Qualification for Head teachers (NPQH); and induction and continuing training programmes through the Training and Development Agency (TDA) for Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and other support staff. Schools are also advised to consider mentoring and coaching arrangements for new and existing staff as part of their continuing professional development (CPD) and to utilise the experience of those staff with specific roles in behaviour (for example, Learning Support Unit (LSU) managers, SENCOs, and Nurture Group managers).

LAs and commercial providers also offer a range of training programmes which can be tailored to meet the needs of specific school settings. The Department agrees with the Committee that LAs should assess the content of their courses to ensure that staff receive sufficient training on how to deal with all forms of bullying.

As part of their programme of work with schools identified as having weak or ineffective anti-bullying policies, the National Strategies Regional Advisers and LA Behaviour and Attendance Consultants will be able to help schools and LAs to identify training needs.

## The Curriculum

**20. We urge schools to review the use of the curriculum to support anti-bullying work and to monitor the effectiveness of this approach. Consideration should also be given to a higher profile for bullying in schools by inclusion in citizenship and PSHE lessons. These lessons should be available from an earlier age in all schools.**

The PSHE framework provides teachers with a clear opportunity to develop young people’s knowledge, skills and attitudes on issues such as bullying. Within the PSHE framework, pupils should be taught about bullying and how to address it at each



Key Stage, starting with an understanding of the different types of teasing and bullying and an awareness that bullying is wrong at Key Stage 1, and progressing to an understanding of how to challenge offending behaviour, bullying, racism and discrimination assertively and how to take the initiative in giving and receiving support by the time they reach Key Stage 4. QCA has also issued a package of guidance for teachers of PSHE which includes a *Bullying* unit. This unit provides guidance on lesson planning, activities and outcomes exploring the issue of bullying.

There are topics within the Citizenship curriculum which are useful vehicles for teaching about issues related to the anti-bullying work of the school. The QCA has developed relevant schemes of work for Citizenship which teachers can use to explore issues relating to bullying. For example, at Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils can look at bullying in the 'Living in a diverse world' and 'Developing our school grounds' units; at Key Stage 3, in the 'Human rights' and 'How do we deal with conflict?' units; and at Key Stage 4, in the 'Challenging racism and discrimination' unit (among others).

The revised anti-bullying guidance for schools will include information on using PSHE and Citizenship lessons to raise awareness of the school's anti-bullying policy and about bullying and discrimination in general. It will also advise schools to use the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) curriculum resource. SEAL, which was initially developed for primary schools, provides a whole-school framework and resources to help schools to systematically and progressively develop pupils' social and emotional skills. Each of the seven themes in the Primary SEAL resource is relevant to reducing bullying; the 'Say No to Bullying' theme provides an explicit focus on bullying and is a useful resource for Anti-Bullying Week.

PSHE and Citizenship share a joint non-statutory framework at primary level (5–11 year-olds). Although non-statutory, there is an expectation that all schools will deliver the lessons. The framework splits at age 11—PSHE remains non-statutory for 11–16 year-olds; Citizenship becomes a statutory subject.

For pre-school children, the Foundation Stage framework forms the basis for anti-bullying work in the National Curriculum. The framework has six areas of learning and development, with early learning goals that childcare practitioners help children to work towards. The relevant goals for anti-bullying fall within the area of Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Among others, children should: be sensitive to the needs, views and feelings of others; have a developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people; work together harmoniously; and consider the consequences of their words and actions for themselves and others. The Foundation Stage framework is statutory for all government-funded settings providing education and childcare for 0–5 year-olds. From September 2008, the new Early Years Foundation Stage will be statutory for all providers, including schools, nurseries and childminders.

## The School and Wider Community

**21. We welcome the Government's funding of Parentline Plus. In order to ensure that this resource is as effective as possible we urge the Government to ensure that schools promote it to parents. We also urge the Government to review what guidance or help is available to governors in relation to anti-bullying work. It is vital that governors, who**



are the first formal recourse parents have if they wish to complain about the way that school has dealt with an incident of bullying, understand and are engaged with the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school. We strongly believe that School Governing Bodies have a key role to play in effectively tackling bullying, and we urge that all Governing Bodies appoint a 'champion' to take responsibility for this issue, and that termly reports are made to the relevant Governing Body, setting out any incidents and actions taken. However we believe that where there is a clear ethos in a school which included respect for others and their right which is underpinned by the curriculum that this is a protective factor against bullying.

We have recently confirmed funding for the anti-bullying aspect of Parentline Plus' work for the 2007–08 financial year.

The charity promotes itself nationally through: public information campaigns, an interactive website; national media; mail distribution; and exhibits at events. Locally, it advertises itself through: outreach; courses and workshops; local media; and the targeted distribution of materials. The Department also endeavours to raise awareness of the charity's work. We envisage that our revised general guidance on bullying will include a section of resources for schools, including a leaflet on bullying for parents and a model letter that explains the school's complaints procedure. Both of these resources will include the phone number and website of Parentline Plus.

We expect school governors as well as teachers and other members of staff to read our anti-bullying guidance. Indeed, within the guidance which we will publish in the summer on countering homophobic bullying, there are specific sections which outline the legal duties of governors and how they can prevent bullying. There is also specific statutory guidance for school governors regarding their duty to determine the underlying principles of the school behaviour policy (chapter 2 of the overall *School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies* guidance). Governors are legally obliged to "have regard to" this guidance in exercising their functions under 88(2) of EIA 2006. Further advice is available on the governing body's legal obligation to establish the school's complaints procedure.

## Complaints

**22. We recommend that the Government work with the Office of the Children's Commissioner, Parentline Plus, the Advisory Centre for Education and other organisations working in this area to establish the requirements necessary for a robust complaints procedure at school and local level. They should also develop a credible independent appeals procedure to help ensure that pupils and parents have confidence that their concerns are taken seriously.**

The OCC published a draft report on the school complaints procedure for bullying in November 2006 (*Bullying in Schools in England: A Review of the Current Complaints System and a Discussion of Options for Change*). The Department facilitated a consultation meeting on behalf of the OCC with representatives of the teacher unions, the ABA, and other key stakeholders in January. Ministers are awaiting the OCC's final report and recommendations before making any decisions.

The Department is aware that the idea of an independent complaints panel or similar arrangement has not found favour with some of the teacher unions, who feel it would be too burdensome and believe that the existing school complaints procedure—which is a legal requirement with accompanying web guidance—is sufficient.

The revised anti-bullying guidance will remind schools of their duty to have a complaints procedure and to make this known to the parents of registered pupils. A model letter to parents, informing them of their school's complaints procedure, and an example of a satisfaction survey for parents will be included in the resources section of the guidance.

## Difficulties with delivering more effective anti-bullying programmes

**23. The attitude and engagement of headteachers is vital to tackling bullying. However, it appears from our evidence that headteachers do not always have the knowledge or training to deal with these issues, particularly given the problems with teacher training which we have already discussed. We recommend that the Government, together with the National College for School Leadership, develops a programme for school leaders on how to tackle bullying and complaints about bullying.**

The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) contains several study units relating to bullying and behaviour management, the most pertinent being 2.3 ('Meeting the needs of all pupils') and 4.4 ('Health, welfare and safety'), which enable schools to make a systematic assessment of the effectiveness of their policies and practices in relation to behaviour. There are, however, references across several study units to this issue. Candidates are given questions to reflect on and sources for further information. NPQH study materials are regularly updated and the course is currently undergoing a comprehensive redesign. The DfES will work with the NCSL and partners to ensure policy priorities are reflected in any future content.

Head teachers can also take part in the National Programme for Specialist Leaders in Behaviour and Attendance (NPSL-BA). The accredited course provides opportunities for school staff to: review and revise their policy and practice on bullying in relation to current national policy and guidance; create a school ethos in which bullying is taken seriously and where systems are in place to record incidents; deepen their understanding of the legal issues related to bullying; and develop and deepen their understanding and implementation of interventions and approaches that address bullying behaviour.

## Judging success

**24. We urge the Government to initiate an open and honest discussion about how to judge the success of anti-bullying work. We consider that expecting anti-bullying work to completely eradicate bullying is unrealistic. We believe it would be more helpful for the Government to foster a culture where schools are encouraged to be open about incidents of bullying, have effective ways of dealing with bullying when it occurs and provide support to the victims of bullying, rather than a culture where schools feel reporting incidents of bullying will damage their reputation.**

The Department agrees that fostering an open and honest culture around the issue of bullying is the right way forward. The use of the SEAL programme through the National

Strategies encourages schools to develop a positive climate for learning and a supportive ethos and culture that is conducive to openness across the whole school community.

We will make clear in the revised anti-bullying guidance that we expect all schools to record incidents of bullying and report these to their LA. We do not intend to make this a legal duty, but will be encouraging schools to keep these records. This data can be used at local level to improve the services and support that LAs offer to schools and to develop improved strategies for dealing with bullying across the area as a whole.

The data could also be used by the National Strategies in their work to identify schools with weak or ineffective anti-bullying policies. The aim would not be to “name and shame” these schools, but to offer support, identify training needs, and help to improve school policies and anti-bullying strategies. The ABA is also well-placed to share good practice, and does this through its nine Regional Co-ordinators, newsletters, and the ABA website.

In addition, there is an expectation that all secondary schools will work in partnership to improve behaviour and tackle persistent absence by September 2007. Whilst bullying is not a specific remit, from the evidence we have to date it is clear that pupils facing difficult circumstances—and this might well include victims and perpetrators of bullying—can benefit from being in a partnership of schools. A school partnership can share issues, experience, resources and expertise. It can offer young people more options and provide a chance to deal with issues creatively, often without needing to take more drastic or permanent action.

## Appendix 2

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Further to my oral evidence to the Education and Skills Select Committee investigation into bullying earlier this year, we were recently pleased to submit a written response to the Committee's recommendations and to inform the Committee of the latest developments within anti-bullying policy.

In the interest of clarity we are keen to update the Committee on a further development which they will wish to consider alongside our formal reply.

The Committee will have noted in our response, that reference is made to a "suite of materials on prejudice-driven bullying", as well as to guidance on cyberbullying. This is particularly the case with regards our responses to recommendations 1, 8, and 21.

We have reconsidered our approach to issuing a suite of guidance in this way, shaped in part by ongoing discussion with the main professional associations, and we will now proceed with one overarching piece of anti-bullying guidance.

It is in response to schools' need to have the most practical and accessible advice at their disposal, that we will be issuing this consolidated, user-friendly guidance. This will prevent schools from becoming over-burdened with a range of materials and advice on bullying, and will provide an authoritative reference on all bullying issues. We also believe that it will increase the number of school staff who will actively use and implement this guidance. It will be issued under the title *Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools*.

We remain totally committed to ensuring that schools have the advice and resources they require to support them in tackling *all* forms of bullying, including prejudice-driven bullying and emerging forms of bullying such as cyberbullying, and these topics will be addressed within the consolidated guidance and online materials. They will still be given the specialist attention which they require, since the overarching guidance will include messages about homophobic bullying, bullying related to race, religion and culture, and bullying related to pupils' special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities, as well as cyberbullying.

However, in producing one piece of guidance we will ensure that approaches to bullying are not fragmented, that no "hierarchy" seems to exist, and that certain types of bullying do not become ghettoised. Rather, schools will be able to make the appropriate links between all kinds of bullying and feel confident that they have the tools to deal with each. We will continue to actively engage with anti-bullying experts, practitioners and the relevant groups in shaping this material further, with a view to launching in July, with subsequent sections added to the overall piece in September and early 2008.

Please can I ask that this is taken into consideration when the full response is formally reviewed at your meeting on Monday 4 June. We look forward to publication of the full response and to receiving any additional comments which you may wish to share.

*Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP, Secretary of State for Education and Skills*

*June 2007*